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ABSTRACT

An alcohol awareness campaign was designed and implemented as a collaborative effort between communication majors at Rutgers University participating in an organization simulation and a prevention specialist from the Center for Alcohol Studies. College seniors participating in a semester-long organizational simulation called Lindlee Enterprises designed the "RU Aware?" campaign to modify the existing image of alcohol as a medium for personal and social fulfillment. The simulation began at the beginning of the semester with a training period during which positions were assigned. Later, Lindlee conducted an employee (student) survey on alcohol awareness. Jobs assigned to the students included promotion and production, research, training, fundraising, and personnel. The students distributed newsletters and information sheets, and participated in such activities as a Mocktail party. In addition, they developed a hotline, the response rate of which exceeded the use of an official health hotline at the university. The students had to learn about excessive alcohol use to design the campaign, and what started out as a campaign for others came to have personal significance to those working on it. The experiences of the students in this case study suggest that students can be provided with information, and that information is power. (Twenty-four references are attached.) (PRA)

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First You Have to Get Their Attention: A Case Study of an Alcohol Awareness Campaign Designed for and by College Students

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First You Have to Get Their Attention: A Case Study of an Alcohol Awareness Campaign Designed for and by College Students

Abstract

Getting college students to learn about the realities associated with excessive drinking is a challenge facing many colleges and universities today. At Rutgers University this year an awareness campaign was designed and implemented as a collaborative effort between communication majors participating in an organizational simulation, LINDLEE ENTERPRISES, and a prevention specialistic from the Center for Alcohol Studies. The goal of the collaboration was to design a campaign to modify the existing image of alcohol as a medium for personal and social fulfillment. To achieve this end, students participating in the semester-long LINDLEE ENTERPRISES organizational simulation designed the "RU Aware?" campaign. They themselves had to learn about excessive alcohol use to design it. This paper presents a case study describing what these students were able to do in designing an alcohol awareness campaign and what happened to their own awareness levels while designing the campaign for others.

First You Have to Get Their Attention: A Case Study of an Alcohol Awareness Campaign Designed for and by College Students

Introduction

Alcohol is the drug of choice of many college students. In a study of alcohol use, Gallup (1987) reported that 72% of students questioned nationwide said they used alcohol. Seventy percent of the respondents who were under 21 years of age, and 75.8% of the legal age drinkers were those who indicated they had used alcohol. From freshman to senior year, respondents reported drinking increased from 65% to 77%. Thus, not only is each year in college positively associated with increased drinking, but two-thirds of entering freshmen are already reporting drinking behavior. Nor does drinking alcohol take place in an isolated environment on the college campus. It exists in a rich variety of contexts (Gallup, 1987). More than 20% of the students on the college campus today are high risk drinkers, that is, those who drink more than five drinks at a sitting or more than once or twice a week (Eagleton, 1990).[1] Each time they drink, the high risk drinkers take the chance of dying from alcohol poisoning whether they are drinking for the first time or already have alcohol problems. Those without alcohol problems, and who do not die in alcohol-related accidents, will leave this excess behind them along with many other college-related behaviors. These are the majority of students. But neither they nor the moderate drinkers nor even those who do not drink at all are free from the threat of alcohol-related problems on the college campus today. Recent reports indicate that more than 95% of the crimes on campuses are drug or alcohol-related.

The image of excessive drinking as socially desirable is pervasive enough to be a visible part of the culture of the college campus. This makes problem drinking difficult to detect. It exists on the college campus in an environment in which excessive drinking is part of the student culture. This is reflected, too, in the literature on college students and alcohol use. There is an utter lack of awareness amongst most students of what constitutes a drinking problem or where to turn on the campus for the services which might help those with problems (Gallop, 1987). As one student in a group interview put it, "I don't worry about whether I drink eight or nine beers in a night, as long as I don't fall on my face in the snow on the way home," (Burns & Goodstadt, 1989).

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[1] These are definitions of high risk drinkers commonplace in the research literature on alcohol use.

Clearly alcohol abuse is a problem of enormous magnitude on college campuses. Getting students to learn about the realities associated with excessive drinking is a challenge facing many colleges and universities today. An alcohol awareness campaign must marshal a variety of forces to do this. The first of these apparently is to capture the attention and interest of the target audience so as to make them receptive to information about alcohol use and/or to let them know where it exists when and if they need it for themselves or their friends.

At Rutgers University this year an awareness campaign was designed and implemented as a collaborative effort between communication majors participating in an organizational simulation, LINDLEE ENTERPRISES, and a prevention specialistic from the Center for Alcohol Studies. The goal of the collaboration was to design a campaign to modify the existing image of alcohol as a medium for personal and social fulfillment. To achieve this end, students participating in the semester-long LINDLEE ENTERPRISES organizational simulation designed the "RU Aware?" campaign. They themselves had to learn about excessive alcohol use to design it. This paper presents a case study describing what these students were able to do in designing an alcohol awareness campaign and what happened to their own awareness levels while designing the campaign for others.

Background: Simulations and Organizations

Simulations, although sometimes fun, are deceptively educational (Lederman, 1983). The processes of learning about oneself, one's roles in life and many aspects of living in general, can be represented as game-playing behaviors which once modeled can be simulated in the classroom for instructional purposes. Literature reviews of the findings of more than three dozen studies assessing their educational effectiveness report strong and consistent empirical as well as anecdotal evidence that simulations are at least as effective as traditional methods for most cognitive learning and far superior to any other method for increased behavioral and affective learning (Barnett, 1984; Bredemeier & Greenblat, 1981; Lederman & Ruben, 1978; Pierfy, 1977).

Simulations vary in length, size and complexity (Tansey and Unwin, 1969). They are defined in the literature as "operating models of reality" in which participants learn about themselves and the realities being modeled (Ruben, 1977). Depending upon the reality or aspect of reality

being modeled, however, they all have five common characteristics: players cast in "roles"; "interactions" between those roles; "rules" governing the interactions; "goals" with respect to which interactions occur; and "outcome criteria" determining the attainment of the goals and termination of the activity (Ruben & Lederman, 1982; Ruben, 1977).

Organizational simulations are used to provide students with learning experiences about various aspects of the ways in which communication works in the organizational context. The learning for which these structures are designed is primarily processural. The tasks on which participants work can therefore be content-free, as in PASS IT ON (Lederman & Stewart, 1985) where participants pass any sort of messages along a hierarchy, or HIGH FLY FIREWORKS, (Ferrace, Monge, & Russell, 1976) where participants build structures with tinker toys or THE MARBLE COMPANY (Lederman and Stewart, 1985) where players sort and count marbles. It is not that these tasks don't matter. It is that the content about which the students are to learn focuses on the processes associated with the tasks more than the content of which those tasks are comprised. It doesn't matter, for example, what the messages are that are passed along the hierarchy in PASS IT ON or what the students make with the tinker toys in HIGH FLY. What matters is that they pass the messages or make the toys and in engaging in those behaviors, exhibit the processes, affects and concepts for which the simulations are designed.

In contradistinction, LINDLEE ENTERPRISES (Lederman & Stewart, 1987), is designed to use the content of the task level of the simulation as part of the learning experience. In addition to learning about the various organizational communication processes, students learn about the content of a major task project in which they participate. This is accomplished by the incorporation of a project which requires the design and/or implementation of some communication service or product for a client who will actually use it. In this way, students learn both about processes (organizational communication) and content (the aspects of the communication project in which they are involved as part of their "work" in the organizational simulation).

Each time the semester-long LINDLEE ENTERPRISES simulation runs, one client is identified for whom the simulated organization produces the communication product or service which will actually be used. In this application of the simulation, the client was the prevention specialist who was project director of a major grant from the U.S. Department of Education designed to improve alcohol awareness on campus. The service which LINDLEE ENTERPRISES was hired to perform was to design a

prototype for an alcohol awareness campaign. The next section describes LINDLEE ENTERPRISES and the campaign it set out to design and implement.

LINDLEE ENTERPRISES and the "RU Aware?" Campaign

LINDLEE ENTERPRISES is a semester-long organizational simulation which has been in operation at Rutgers University since 1985. It consists of a hierarchical structure, headed by its senior partners who work with junior partners, managers, and project departments to produce for one client a communication product or service for which the organization is hired and on which it works for the semester. Students who participate in the simulation are college seniors, majoring in communication, who have already studied organizational communication theory. They are socialized into LINDLEE through a three week "training" period. Following the training period, they apply for and are hired for jobs in either production project departments (research; public relations; promotion) or operations project departments (training; fund raising; personnel)[2] or as managers or junior partners. The work time in the simulation is divided into the training period, the production period and the presentation/delivery period. During each of these time periods, approximately two thirds of class time is devoted to work in the simulated organization. The remainder of the time is devoted to processing their experiences, or debriefing, the post-experience analysis of behaviors and their implications (Lederman, 1984). In this paper the students are often referred to as "employees" to indicate that what they were working on and what was happening to them was occurring as they participated in their roles in the simulation.

In 1990, LINDLEE ENTERPRISES' client was an alcohol prevention specialist from the Rutgers University Center for Alcohol Studies. He agreed to hire LINDLEE and work with the organization to create an alcohol awareness campaign to serve as a prototype for alcohol awareness on college campuses. The "RU Aware?" campaign, with an intentional pun on the university initials, grew out of extensive background research conducted to learn what is known about drinking on college campuses. The campaign was designed to run during the week of April 23-26. Four ads containing trivia questions concerning alcohol usage were to

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[2] The titles of these groups and the functions they serve are determined by the client and project for the particular run of the simulation. The organization being simulated is modeled on an agency or medium sized partnership.

be designed to appear in the campus newspaper along with a hotline number to call for further information. The hotline was to be designed so that students calling it would reach a recording on which they would hear a different message each day. Based on research conducted by LINDLEE, the message would be designed to contain various facts about abuse of alcohol, local numbers to call for assistance, and the answers to that day's trivia questions. The final day of the campaign, the ad would consist of the four question CAGE[3] questionnaire with a message on the hotline which told students how to interpret the results. All students who left their own messages on the hotline machine were entitled to receive an alcohol awareness "kit" which provided them with additional alcohol information, and a button with the campaign slogan imprinted on it. In addition to the advertising in the daily newspaper, the campaign consisted of the design and distribution of several hundred fliers advertising the hotline, T-shirts with the campaign slogan, and a campaign display table at a major intersection for student foot traffic on campus.

LINDLEE ENTERPRISES simulates a complex organization. As in any complex organization, the work at LINDLEE is specialized and compartmentalized. The "employees" (students) who were primarily responsible for the campaign were in the production side of the simulated organization. Others, working in LINDLEE's operations departments (personnel, training, fund raising) were not directly involved in the design of the campaign or the background research about it. About three weeks into the design of the campaign, the students in the research and production departments began to feel that they were learning a lot about alcohol use and others at LINDLEE ought to be able to benefit from what they were learning. Addressing these concerns to the senior partner, they were granted permission to disseminate the information being learned by production departments to other "employees" (students) at LINDLEE. It was decided that the training department would handle the matter. It was designated to create an alcohol awareness week for LINDLEE. Their organizational information dissemination looked like the "employee" drug and alcohol awareness campaigns prevalent in the kind of organizations LINDLEE simulates.[4]

Because the flow of messages through the organization is an important part of the learning for which the LINDLEE ENTERPRISES simulation is designed, it is a practice to keep written documentation of

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[3] The CAGE instrument is a well recognized measure of alcohol problems.

[4] Programs like this exist as "Wellness and Health" or somesuch name, at large organizations, such as, Johnson and Johnson, Squibb, etc.

official business. A paper trail of the alcohol information dissemination was created. These documents became the data about the unfolding of alcohol awareness at LINDLEE. The next section summarizes the flow of alcohol-related information through the organization as the campaigns were designed for the client and for the internal organizational use.

A Chronology of the Diffusion of Information about Alcohol Use within LINDLEE ENTERPRISES

The simulation began on January 21 with the training period mentioned above. Early in February, at the end of training, actual positions in the organization were applied for and assigned. The first time information about the client and the project was made available to the managers was at the first meeting of managers on February 15. Managers were given a copy of the client's letter to the senior partner outlining LINDLEE's task and objectives. The primary objective was to determine whether LINDLEE ENTERPRISES could identify ways in which to modify this governing image of alcohol/drugs as a medium for personal and social fulfillment.

At this point, the alcohol related tasks were confined mostly to the Research and PR/Production Departments. Research was to determine the basis upon which the campaign should be designed and conducted. PR/Production was to brainstorm possibilities for external information dissemination for the final campaign. Training, Fund Raising and Personnel Departments were involved with providing the foundation of operations for the organization itself.

Lindlee Policy Regarding Confidentiality and Information Flow

The information about alcohol use reviewed by the Research Department was supplied by the client. His expertise was in alcohol studies. What he wanted from LINDLEE was expertise in communication campaigns. Much of the information was as yet unpublished. Confidentiality was important. Managers were instructed that all alcohol-related information was confidential and not to leave the confines of the organization. The information flow was to be strictly hierarchical; everything was to be cleared through the Senior Partner.

Preliminary Meeting with the Client

Thursday, March 1, was set for the first formal meeting with the client, although the senior partner would be communicating with the client informally prior to this date. The purpose of this meeting would be to hold a question/answer session rather than a formal presentation. Invited to attend were the Junior Partners and the managers of the Training, Fund Raising, Research and PR/Production Departments.

Distribution of Initial Alcohol Use Survey

Because of the vast amount of material that the Research Department had to review in a short time to get the necessary background information about college drinking, and because all "employees" at LINDLEE were college students, it was decided to create a survey to use among LINDLEE "employees" to measure their alcohol usage. This was the first realization that LINDLEE "employees" could be used as a sample of the target population for whom the campaign was to be designed. From this time on, a conscious effort was made, wherever possible, to use the LINDLEE "employees" to pre-test ideas for the campaign. It was later in the production phase that a second conscious decision was made: to allow LINDLEE "employees" to benefit from what was being learned about alcohol use. This is discussed later in this summary when it occurred.

The Lindlee survey of "employee" (student) alcohol use was directly relevant to the program to be implemented for the client. Its initial purpose was to conduct an internal check on the validity of data about students at the University gathered three years earlier. A major incident had occurred in the interim. A student had died from alcohol poisoning. The survey of LINDLEE "employees" was to see if their responses were comparable to those of students at the University three years before. They were. Because of this, the LINDLEE survey became the prototype for two subsequent surveys distributed later on in the campaign. It also marked the first time that those employed on the Operations side of the organization were exposed to the content (alcohol awareness) of the campaign. Before this, only Production personnel were learning about alcohol use as they did the background research required for the project.

First Official Client Meeting

After a welcome from the Senior Partner, and introductions of relevant personnel, the first formal meeting with the client took place. Its purpose was to get a shared understanding of the goal of the project and to build a relationship with the client so that he would work with the organization in designing the campaign. Only the key personnel involved with the project for the client were present at this meeting.

During the meeting the client defined the primary focus of the LINDLEE designed campaign would be to focus exclusively on alcohol as a drug, with specific attention to the role it plays in students' lives. The Research team presented the client with an evaluation of both the alcohol use study conducted three years prior and the initial survey conducted at Lindlee Enterprises. This initial research was a building block for subsequent research and ultimately, the final product. As a result of this meeting, a memo was sent to the Manager of PR/Production, from the Manager of Research releasing the information amassed on college age alcohol use. After this point, the major responsibility for the alcohol-related tasks belonged to the PR/Production and Research Departments and the results generated from the studies reviewed remained in the hands of Production team "employees."

Presentation of the Campaign Proposal to Client

Three weeks later the formal presentation of the proposal was made to the client. The Junior Partner for Production did formal introductions and generally led the meeting. The Manager of Research made public the information contained within the results of the Eagleton Study, the initial LINDLEE survey as well as a review of the relevant literature and interviews with local experts. However, hard copies of the research report were not made available to Operations "employees" who were not directly involved with the design of the campaign at this point. The Manager of the PR/Production Department outlined the proposal for the campaign. For all those not directly involved with the development of the campaign, specifically, the Operations people, this was the first time the elements of the campaign became public knowledge.

All members of the Operations side of the organization took on the role of silent observer for the duration of this meeting. They were asked to think of themselves as being behind an invisible wall; they could see, but

could not be seen. They were not able to take part in the presentation in any way.

LINDLEE Hired by Client

Managers were informed, via memo dated March 20 from the Senior Partner, the client had decided to hire LINDLEE ENTERPRISES. He did, however, have several changes and refinements to the campaign plan which he thought necessary to be implemented. These were outlined extensively in a three-page letter from him, copies of which were distributed to each manager at Lindlee.

It was during this meeting that it was decided that all LINDLEE personnel should be made aware of the alcohol information previously confined only within the Production side of the organization. (This was the second conscious decision to make the students in the simulation a target of the awareness campaign, as mentioned earlier.) The Training Department was instructed to disseminate alcohol awareness information to all "employees." An Alcohol Awareness Week for LINDLEE was created. It was to take place in April before the "RU Aware?" campaign. It was to be designed to have a number of alcohol related activities for all LINDLEE "employees." It thereby served as a possible source of additional data for the campaign based on how "employees" responded to the alcohol-related materials.

Additional aspects of the "RU Aware?" campaign were designed. Money was needed to fund the newspaper ads. A button with the campaign slogan was designed and produced. The Fund Raising Department was charged with responsibility for the button campaign. The Personnel Department was to become more involved soon after this meeting.

Within the following week, hard copies of the research report created for the client were made accessible to all managers who wanted them. As the Training Department was now responsible for the dissemination of alcohol information, it was critical that they obtain a copy of the aforementioned document. They, too, now were privy to the information about alcohol use.

Task List for Junior Partner of Production

Once the client officially hired LINDLEE ENTERPRISES, the organization was task driven and working under a tight time frame. It had less than one month before the campaign was to run, April 23-26. The Junior Partners created a task list which was disseminated to the various project departments. It outlined their responsibilities:

> "PR/PRODUCTION: Create and develop press materials, including ads and promotional releases; develop message copy and all other aspects of the R.U. Aware Hotline; Complete all required art work; Arrange for the print and distribution of all printed materials; With the Research Department, analyze the responses of callers to the R.U. Aware Hotline.
>
> RESEARCH: Analysis of media clips as a result of the placements obtained by PR/Production; Exit survey of LINDLEE ENTERPRISES; Upgrade research program to satisfy the client; With PR/Production, analyze the responses of callers.
>
> TRAINING: Responsible for follow-up phone calls to users of the hotline; Develop questions for trivia cards.
>
> FUND RAISING: Responsible for button sales.
>
> PERSONNEL: Responsible for staffing and promoting the Lindlee dinner; Make LINDLEE newsletter available for press kits.
>
> All groups should be responsible for the distribution of items in student R.P.O.'s with a volunteer from each group selected. This job may become increasingly important if we need to reduce our Tangum ads to flyers."

Thus, the alcohol information has now been passed on to the Training Department, with Personnel and Fund Raising Departments yet to be informed. It may be important to note that this informative memo stayed within the Production side. The Operations Departments were not apprised of their roles in the campaign until later.

Involvement of Personnel and Fund Raising in Campaign

In conference with the Senior Partner and the Junior Partner for Production, the Junior Partner for Operations learned of the roles that Training and Personnel Departments were to play in the campaign. He

advised Training to share the duty of disseminating alcohol awareness information to "employees" with Personnel. The manager of Training then suggested Personnel to take charge of the slogan contest, and perhaps use the newsletter for this purpose. The Personnel Department was informed at this time that they should be handing out alcohol awareness fact sheets for the week that had been designated LINDLEE Alcohol Awareness Week.

It was decided that the Fund Raising Department would be responsible for the order and sale of the "R.U. Aware?" buttons. All LINDLEE "employees" were required to sell five. Accompanying each button was a information sheet that further served to educate "employees." These buttons served a multitude of purposes. They were sources of fund raising, advertising/PR for the campaign, and prizes for hotline callers. This marked the department's first direct participation in the campaign.

A Critical Day for Information Dissemination

In early April a critical day for dissemination occurred. On this day the following happened:

- Second edition of newsletter distributed. Contained information on slogan contest, alcohol related cartoons, and an introduction to the "Hang Out to Dry" Alcohol Awareness Week. Summations of the roles of the PR/Production and Research Departments were also included.
- Distribution of alcohol awareness fact sheets by personnel occurs.
- LINDLEE's "Hang Out to Dry" information sheet is distributed through inter-office mail.
- Training and Research collaborated on writing trivia questions for campaign using the same alcohol awareness fact sheet that personnel had distributed, although Training had acquired theirs independently of personnel.
- Calender of events available on the Lindlee Bulletin Board to inform all Lindlee "employees" of important dates and deadlines. This calendar underwent a series of revisions and appeared in several forms as new tasks were added to each team's job descriptions.

Alcohol Awareness Week for LINDLEE Employees

Early April was the week designated as Alcohol Awareness for LINDLEE ENTERPRISES. It included:

- Alcohol trivia quiz distributed by Training (winners to be announced at the Mocktail Party).
- Invitations to Mocktail Party sent out.
- From the list generated by Research and Training, 12 trivia questions were chosen to be used for the Targum ads and for the "R.U. Aware?" Game (mocktail party).
- Personnel distributes brochure on alcohol related laws in the state of NJ.
- "Hang Out to Dry" posters were hung in every team's work station.
- Sign up sheet for Mocktail Party posted on bulletin board.

LINDLEE Mocktail Party

On Thursday night, April 15, the Mocktail party was held. It was an event designed for LINDLEE "employees" and guests. Its purpose was to have fun without alcohol.

- Trivia questions were collected.
- Slogan contest entries collected by Personnel.
- Reporter from The Daily Targum visits Lindlee offices.
- Mocktail Party begins at 9:00 p.m.
- "R.U. Aware?" Game played using trivia questions generated by Training and Research departments. Targum reporter participated.
- Trivia contest winners announced.
- Slogan contest winners announced.
- Everyone received the blood alcohol calculator wheel.

Mocktail Follow Up Survey

The mocktail party was a great success. All "employees" attended. Some brought friends. The tone of the night was very positive. At the end of the party, the Senior Partner and members of the Training team who had designed and run the event decided to do an informal follow-up to see what effect, if any, the party had on "employees'" behavior. A questionnaire was designed and distributed the next day at work which asked, anonymously, what "employees" had done after the party and how, if at all, their thoughts or behaviors about alcohol had been affected by the party.

Second LINDLEE Survey Distributed

A second survey about alcohol use was given to "employees." It was restructured to more accurately reflect alcohol-related behaviors of LINDLEE "employees."

Winning Slogan Displayed at LINDLEE Offices

The winning slogan selected at the Mocktail party was displayed for a week at LINDLEE offices. It was a way to reinforce the message about excessive alcohol use as undesirable.

Final Presentation to Client

The final presentation was made to the client, informing him of the success of the hotline. He was provided with information about the number of calls received and people who had also left messages. In addition, he learned that all "employees" had been fully apprised of all the alcohol-related information previously held confidential.

Distribution of Third and Final LINDLEE Alcohol Survey

Employees were also asked to rate their level of raised awareness as a result of having worked at Lindlee.

Outcomes of the Campaign

The Research team conducted both external and internal research to determine the effectiveness of the campaign. Externally, the hotline was monitored for calling activity during the week of the campaign. The data collected indicated the number of calls per day and hour, the number of names left for referrals and the number of calls which remained on the line to hear the entire message. A judgment survey of 100 students from the Rutgers population was also conducted to see how much of an impact the campaign had on the university community. Basically it asked if the respondent had heard of the campaign and if so, how.

Within LINDLEE ENTERPRISES, as mentioned in the summary above, three surveys were conducted to measure the effectiveness of the campaign on the students' own drinking attitudes and behaviors. The first survey was short and was distributed about two weeks into the campaign. The second survey was a much longer instrument, and was distributed about a week before the campaign began. The final survey, distributed one week after the conclusion of the campaign, included the additional question: On a rating from 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "a great deal," please indicate how much you feel working on this campaign affected your attitude towards alcohol. Additionally, the questionnaire after the mocktail party asked students in LINDLEE about the experience of the party, its effects on their thinking and behavior thereafter, and other questions to get a sense of how, if at all, the fun they had had at the mocktail party and the alcohol information to which they had been exposed had meaning for them.

Discussion

What began as an ordinary run of the simulation which had been in operation for five years at Rutgers University for teaching students about organizational communication, turned out, in addition, to be a rich learning experience about alcohol awareness campaigns. In the case presented here, the official campaign which was launched captured the attention of a meaningful number of students on the campus. It was designed by students for students so they knew what their audience would like. The campaign itself worked. The client, an experienced prevention specialist, was entirely satisfied that LINDLEE had come up with a workable design for a hotline. The response rate to the hotline was substantial by comparison with services offered elsewhere. In fact, it exceeded the use of an official health hotline at the University. The interest in it could be built upon. But

beyond that, the unfolding of alcohol-related awareness among the students working on the project has significance for alcohol awareness campaigns. No one could have been more dedicated than the students participating in the simulation. No one could have had to research as much material about alcohol use on the college campus in a shorter time. No one could have been exposed to more messages, both tailored by them and to them, and presented in various and appealing ways: a party, a slogan contest, T-shirts, buttons, discussion groups and a vast storehouse of information about the nature of alcohol use. What is apparent throughout the literature on college students and alcohol, showed up with consistency during the simulation: students' utter lack of awareness about alcohol. When they began the project, they were sorely uneducated as to any dangers associated with their own use levels; they knew little about how to detect signs of drinking problems other than the most extreme; and they were relatively ignorant of the services available to them which might help those with problems.

What started out as a campaign for others, came to have significance to those working on it for themselves. These students responded and were open to exposure to the messages. The messages did not show an obvious translation into behavioral change. Yet anecdotally, there were at least informational and perhaps, affective changes. Students learned that five or more drinks at one sitting was high risk behavior. They began using that number as a way of talking about themselves and others, even at times, in jest. They became familiar with the four question CAGE test which is well accepted as a good indicator of problem drinking. They learned a variety of facts and figures about alcohol use to design the trivia questions for the official campaign or to play in the alcohol games designed for the mocktail party. In their reports on their own behaviors after that party, they described going out--some of them for drinks--and talking about the project. They talked about the project and what they learned about alcohol use with friends and family. In a word, they became a more informed sub-culture in the wider University culture. If we were looking for visible change, we saw it in these ways rather than in differences in their reports on their use of alcohol. Those who drank, drank still. Probably as much as before. But not without awareness of what they had been studying. The experience provides evidence that no one message, or set of messages, no matter how well suited to a target audience can be expected to affect behavior immediately. It lent evidence to communication scholars understanding of the non-linearity of messages. Probably, most meaningfully, it suggested that messages need to exist together with other messages over time to have impact. The obvious effects were marginal. But those effects may be the tip of the iceberg. This case illustrates once

again that information on dangers associated with excessive drinking is hard to evaluate for impact immediately. And perhaps that's not when and how to evaluate it.

Conclusion

Alcohol abuse is a problem on college campuses of enormous magnitude. It is clear that what is needed is a change in image. College students who imagine excessive drinking as socially desirable behavior are at risk for alcohol poisoning. Those with alcohol problems are at risk of going undetected for their years at college where they are surrounded by others who drink alcoholically as part of a right of passage. But the experiences of the students in this study suggest that students can be provided with information and that information is power. When and how they use that power remains to be seen. Information is not the sufficient condition. But it is the necessary condition. What we learned at Rutgers was how to get students attention to provide them with that information.

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